TL 1822-25

ESTAFETA

Newsletter of the ASIA-PACIFIC CONFERENCE ON EAST TIMOR June 3, 1994

THIRD DAY RECAP

The morning of the third day began with an introduction of participating organizations and the reading of solidarity messages. This was followed by the the playing of video-taped messages from two leading lights of the East Timorese liberation movement, Jose Ramos Horta and Konis Santana.

Jose Ramos Horta, Co-Chairperson of the CNRM, dwelt on the cultural and historic ties that bind East Timor with the rest of Asia, especially the Philippines: both countries were colonized, both share a common faith, and more importantly, both are undergoing the same struggle for genuine freedom and independence.He also cited the potential role that East Timor could play as a member of the ASEAN and other groups of nations in the Asian region. He expounded on the CNRM Peace Plan, citing possible cooperation with Indonesia and Portugal under the auspices of the UN.

Konis Santana, Commander-in-chief of FALINTIL, stated that the liberation movement in East Timor is open and flexible in exploring all possible channels that may lead to the resolution of the conflict. In an admirable gesture of true statesmanship and altruism, Santana declared their willingness to resolve differences with Indonesia in such a way that the latter's honour as a nation would still be kept intact.

APCET participants Max Stahl and Inez Almeida then took to the stage to offer their own insights: Ines, regarding her thoughts on the CNRM and Max, regarding his personal experiences as a film maker who worked with liberation movement in East Timor.

In the afternoon, participants were divided into groups for the workshops on East Timor solidarity experiences, expressions and options. Topics handled by the groups included human rights, women, people's diplomacy, church solidarity work, indigenous peoples, information/education, and legal aspects of the East Timorese struggle.

The day was capped by a mass co-celebrated by Bishop Aloisius Nobuo Soma and the parish priest of the UP chapel. Bishop Soma delivered a stirring homily condemning the genocide perpetrated by the Indonesian army and extoling the faith and courage of the East Timorese in the face of prevalent suffering and oppression. He then made a call of support from the Filipino faithful for the good fight being waged by the East Timorese.

The spirit of EDSA was revisited in the mass' ending with the emotion-filled singing of Bayan Ko, the adopted hymn of the Filipino anti-dictatorship movement. The song was sung by the entire congregation amidst raised fists symbolizing solidarity with the East Timorese. Bishop Soma's co-celebrant offered his own touching gesture of support, criticizing the Ramos government for succumbing to Indonesian pressure, saying that his fellow-priests were willing to die in defense of human rights and that he would devote prayers for the success of the APCET conference.

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"Estafeta", the Portuguese word after which this official newsletter of APCET is named, literally means the packet containing the messages carried by young couriers in the Maubere guerilla fronts. Estafetas may also refer to the couriers themselves.

Like the message the estafeta bears, APCET's concern is urgent. A matter of life and death. Actually, more of life: the excitement and hope that each day, as APCET looks into the prospects of its solidarity with the East Timorese and as the Maubere freedom fighters pursue the strategic goals of CNRM, the dreams of all peoples in the world for peace and prosperity would descend upon a firmer ground.

Unlike the East Timorese estafeta, however, the newsletter can still accommodate the trivial (jokes and all) if only to remind ourselves that it shall exist only for the meantime. Until we go back to our respective places to proclaim the liberation of the Maubere people.

International Conversations:

''One of the worst things is that is too hot here in Manila.'' ''How hot?'' ''At least 33 C plus about 20 television lamps plus about 60 camera flash lights.''

''We are impressed with ... no absolutely flabbergasted with... the organization, the media, the media, the media, the circus, the traffic, the Solomonic indecision, sultan Macapuno, it was the best week of my life!''

Overheard in a corner that was less private then the speaker thought: ''I hope we get deported tomorrow.'' ''Why?'' '' I really hate offending my absolutely fantastic, hospitable, delightful hosts ..... Yes, I know, of course it's just a cultural difference but ..... balut ..... please general sorry general Fidel, sent me home tomorrow.!''

Anonymous: ''Why did the government have to back down? I was in love with my security guard.''

One of us is having problems. The person at stake is VERY environmentally conscious. Never buys a newspaper. Always shares it with others. After all 99,9% is useless or advertisements = too many logged trees. But these days ... being on the front page is not nothing after all.

Dream: Participant of APCET sleep walk all the way to East Timor. Arrive at the mountain. Finds the guerrillas. Whispers. They smile. The guerrillas . Their eyes twinkle. Their smiles are all over their face. Their body rejoices. They want to dance. They are so happy that somewhere in the world people are caring. Because after all ... they really want to go home. To their families, their beloved, their friends. After all they long so desperately for peace.

Suggestion for alternative use of Malong for all those who fell in love (a little bit or lots that does not matter): step into malong. First one. Then the other. And who knows maybe two becomes one? Saskia and eh .... would be willing to demonstrate upon request. Just approach Saskia, ... not Agnes...

Church: The person next to me had not been in a catholic church 15 years. The ones in front never did. I had the impression that it was not that easy to adopt. Stand. Sit. Stand. Stand. Sit .. oh
no kneel. Stand. Kneel. Sit. Sit. Etc Etc. We, who hadn't been to church for a while, were puzzled too. The speeches in the church were as strong as in the UPSET meeting ... Towards the end one of our other friends was quite confused too when we were asked to shake hands: he introduced himself as usual with his name and was surprised when the person next to him only said: ''Peace be with you.'' Anyway it was a great service. And after all, wasn't Jesus a great human rights campaigner himself?

Hongkong 29 May 1994: Finally, I boarded the airplane after a long delay. I sat back in a very comfortable chair while eating a good lunch. I happened to pick up a Manila newspaper. The first heading is: ''Nobel Prize Winner Deported''. I wanted to step out of the plane but alas! I didn't have a parachute so I drank a few whisky. Then we touched ground and got out of the plane. I had the feeling that just EVERY SINGLE uniformed policeman was staring at me. What to do? The big question now is: ''What to answer?'' I opened my mouth and it said: ''I'm a tourist''.3 days later...MARCELO FEREIRA, International Union of Deportation (IUD), full member. IUD is an international organization with consultative status in the Manila airport category A. Honorary President: Mr. Fidel of IUD.

MARCELO

**submitted articles not printed here will be included in tomorrow's issue.